NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

THE bulletin

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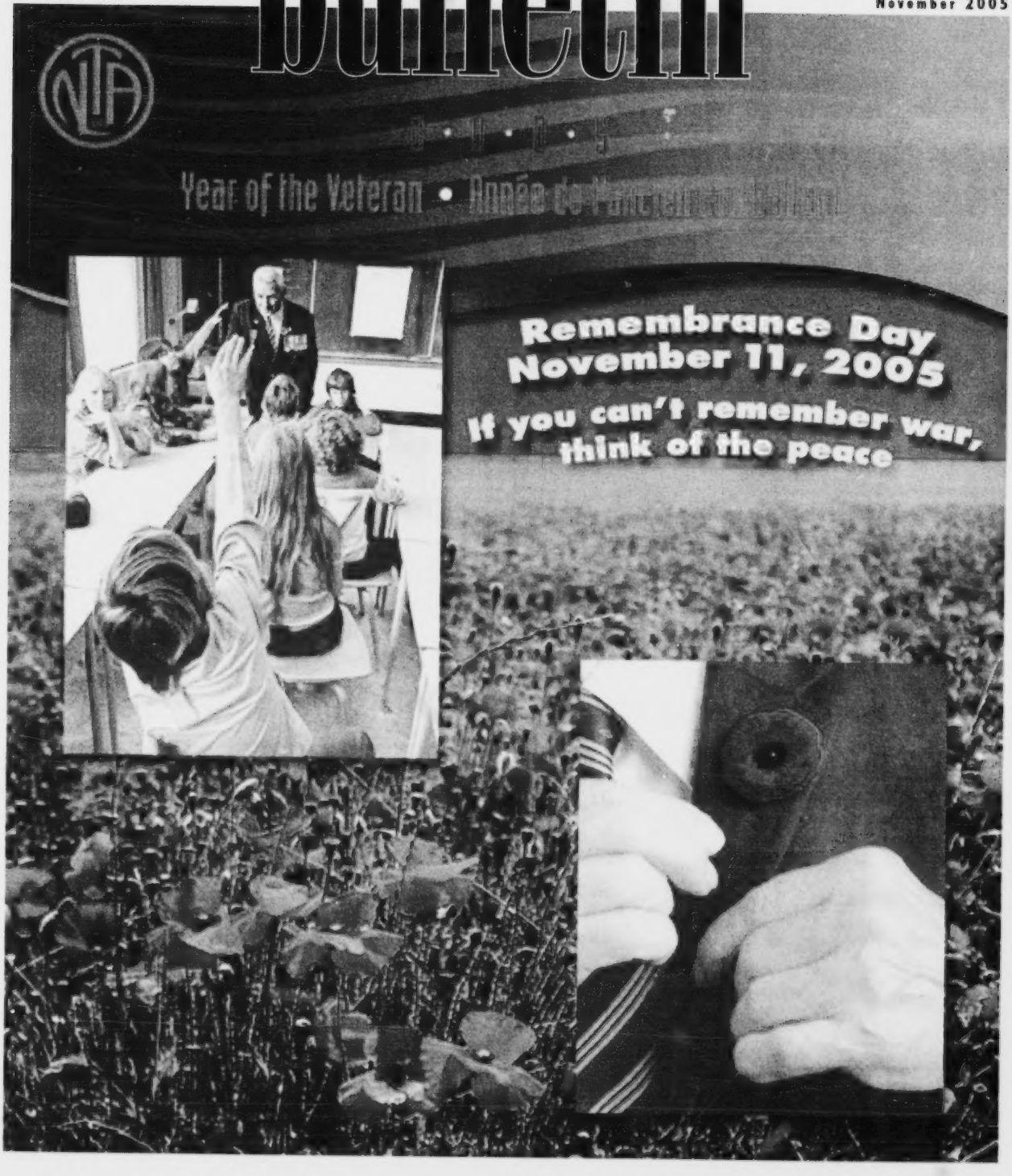

Up Front from the President

I've always been partial to Newfoundland and Labrador. My first glimpse of the bird sanctuary when I visit Cape St. Mary's, a drive down one of those long glacial valleys in Gros Morne or skiing across the windswept barrens of the Upper Lake Melville area in mid-February are but a few examples that regularly remind me why. The opportunities I have been provided with as a result of my school visitations to various parts of the province, even to this point in my tenure, only serves to further reinforce this affinity.

The issues confronting us as teachers seem to be directly proportionate to the diversity of our geography and cultures. On the one extreme the teachers of St. John's face the unrelenting daily onslaught of large class sizes and the massive workload expectations that accompany them while, on the other extreme, the teachers of the north coast of Labrador experience, among other things, the high cost of living and of travel, the demands of multi-grading and insufficient support resulting from isolation. In between those extremes, like the famous bell curve, are all other possible permutations.

One of the main challenges facing the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association is to, at all times, attempt to create the conditions that will allow all teachers wherever they live in our province the ability to do best the job they were trained to do. When these conditions are right we know that this is when progress is made, when the best learning occurs. However, the demands on our time that have entered the teaching profession over the past number of years have slowly eroded the conditions necessary to provide the best for our students.

This is a problem that impacts not only the teachers of our province, but is also having a dramatic impact on teachers everywhere. There are forces that will attempt to have us do more and more and ask us to do it with less and less.

Of all the weapons at our disposal in our attempts to achieve the optimal conditions necessary for teaching and learning, the most effective is collective bargaining. Collective bargaining is a right that allows the weak to keep the strong at bay and a right that prevents those few who feel that they have all the answers from imposing their wills on the remainder. It is a right that I feel is so basic to good order and peace and justice that it has to be celebrated as a freedom that is sacrosanct. And, in this month when we gather at our cenotaphs all across the free world to pay tribute to those who made the supreme sacrifice for our freedoms, we had better ask ourselves exactly what those freedoms were that these fine young people died for. Certainly it is more than the freedom to vote every four or five years or to amass a protest every now and then. Just ask the citizens of countries that don't have it.

However, over the past few years it seems that the basic right to bargain collectively has been easily tossed to one side when it becomes uncomfortable or inconvenient for some people. It has happened in British Columbia. The Liberal government under Gordon Campbell decided to bypass the collective bargaining process for any number of reasons and legislated a contract on the teachers of that province. By the time you read this, I, along with all other presidents of teacher affiliates across Canada, will have returned from Victoria where we stood side by side with the leadership of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation to denounce this unilateral action by that government.

We saw similar action in our own province a few years ago. As we prepare to enter into our own round of collective bargaining, we do so in good faith. The needs of our teachers are real and for the sake of the children of our province it is important that we be heard and that a just collective agreement be fairly and reasonably arrived at. We expect nothing less.

THE bulletin

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Permission to use photos for the cover provided by Dominion Command of The Royal Canadian Legion.

I READ AN ARTICLE IN LAST MONTH'S issue of *The Bulletin* that would have made me quite hot under the collar had I been wearing one. "Dress for Success in the Classroom" sent me into a spitting, frothing fit of rage from which I have drawn the energy to express my opinion on a topic that has been, from the beginning, "tailor-made" for me.

Many professions are business related but, from where I stand (and I do for about 7 hours a day), teaching is definitely not one of them. My place of work is not an air-conditioned office but rather an overcrowded classroom furnished with desks and chairs which protrude jagged pieces of metal that tear at skin and hose alike.

I actually chose to purchase a chair for myself, and this expense may prove to be a cheaper alternative to replacing hitched and torn clothing time and again. So given that I am surrounded by aging furniture ready to snag expensive outfits, coupled with the fact that my work environment's temperature can range from 5 to 25 degrees, I am more concerned with wearing clothing that is comfortable and durable. Most skirts and jackets unfortunately do not fall into that category.

Furthermore, I take offence to the suggestion that dressing "professionally" equates to taking my profession seriously. Judging a book by its cover, or in this case a teacher by her appearance, is antithetical to what I have been taught and have always tried to teach my students. Speaking of books, if my students were to judge their books by their covers (or lack thereof), they surely would not take their studies as seriously as we try to impress upon them.

There are so many aspects of our day and our year over which we teachers are powerless. We can do absolutely nothing about the numbers of students in classes bursting at the seams, nor can we control the flaking paint on our walls or the torn curtains hanging from our windows. More importantly, we are unable to control the amount of time for collaboration and we all know that this is the essence of a professional learning community. I would gladly don the jacket and skirt in exchange for control in other areas.

The message I want to send to my students is simple: Break the mold! Nurture your creativity! Be yourself! In a world where glossy magazines and flawless faces on big movie screens govern impressionable minds, it is up to teachers to provide them with a daily dose of reality. In this way, we may help to keep in check one of the largest epidemics facing today's young people: the infectious idea that we are what we wear.

Fortunately, there are signs of victory in the battle. Many of today's students are increasingly more cognizant of the need to scrutinize and realize that very little can be taken at face value. It is vitally important for my students to know that the person standing in front of them for several hours a day is real inside and out, not some charlatan selling bogus ideas, as transparent as those threadbare and tattered curtains hanging in her classroom.

I will not dress to feign some fashion magazine notion of "professionalism" at the cost of my integrity. I will wear my purple rain boots and my cat earrings and everything else that makes me who I am, all of which my colleagues would agree is completely acceptable and only ever "suggestive" in that it shows me as a colourful, creative individual whose vivacity she wears as a badge of honour.

Respect and productivity have precious little to do with the clothes on a teacher's back and more to do with the backbone underneath. Children are very intuitive and hopefully, have not yet been fashioned into society's straitjackets of construct. Our students are real and know real when they see it. And in my experience, real begets real and respect begets respect.

I refuse to be stifled by the constraints of what society arbitrarily maintains is professional attire. As long as I have the autonomy to express myself through what I wear, my students will see me not as an automaton trudging along on the teacher treadmill, a likeness of every other female teacher in my school. Teaching is an art, ergo I am an artist. My creativity will not be suppressed! Everyday is a fresh canvas. Hmmm… I think tomorrow I'll wear my turquoise shoes with my lime green corduroy jacket and the next day, who knows? But my kids can't wait to find out.

Deana Mitchell
St. Paul's Junior High, St. John's

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

ST. JOHN'S

CNIB seeks volunteers

The CNIB is recruiting volunteers for two new programs in St. John's and surrounding areas. The Para-Mobility Program involves one-on-one instruction on how to move safely and independently around one's home, at work and in the community. The Low Vision Aid Loaner Program allows a client to borrow low vision aids to determine if it meets their needs, prior to purchasing them.

The CNIB is a national non-profit voluntary agency that provides rehabilitative services to clients of all ages who are experiencing vision loss. For more information on these volunteer opportunities and the volunteer screening process, contact Maxine Ennis, Volunteer Coordinator, Tel: 709-754-1180, ext. 218.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Media campaign targets tobacco use in schools

The Newfoundland and Labrador Alliance for the Control of Tobacco (ACT) is pleased to announce the launch of its new Mass Media Campaign entitled *You're a Target – Don't Let Them Get You*. This campaign is all about Youth Prevention, and as such, ACT hopes that teachers in our junior and senior high schools will engage students in discussions/activities about the hazards of tobacco use and the need for smoke-free school grounds. To facilitate this, ACT has sent resource kits based on the theme of the campaign to every teacher in the Grade 7 – Level III school system.

In preparation for this new campaign, in May 2005, ACT commissioned a survey of provincial school administrators concerning smoking and tobacco issues in schools. Recently, the results of this survey were released to the principal of each school, the Minister of Education, the Director of each school district, the NLTA, and the Federation of School Councils. This survey collected some very interesting information about the issue of smoke-free school grounds. Hopefully teachers in their schools will access the survey data and discuss the significant findings. One of the more compelling findings was that 94.2% of administrators (259 of 310 schools responded) said "the Provincial Government should legislate a ban on smoking on all school grounds". "ACT is prepared to work with schools as they work towards smoke-free schoolyards and we hope that the new Youth Prevention Mass Media Campaign will assist in these efforts," states Kevin Coady, Executive Director of ACT.

School/student website challenge

The Smokers' Helpline (SHL) challenges Newfoundland and Labrador students and schools to a website contest. The school with the most students chatting online and the student with the most posts on the Smokers' Helpline Website, wins! It's that simple!

The Newfoundland and Labrador Lung Association Smokers' Helpline has launched the first website in Canada designed to help smokers quit, and prevent young people from starting. The website offers smokers and non-smokers, youth and adult, a way to learn more about tobacco control. Smokers can access self-help materials as well as receive online counseling and peer support. Non-smokers, such as parents, students, teachers and health professionals, can access information on how to help others quit.

Schools should notify the SHL of their interest to learn more about the contest. All students and teachers can sign up with a username, but their username must include the initials of their school as part of their name. For example, if I attend Gonzaga High School I could use the username – "Niki – GHS". Including your school initials enables the number of students each school has online to be counted. The top students and schools with the most messages posted will win prizes.

All students can participate, even non-smokers. The idea is to get online and start chatting about either quitting smoking or why you chose not to smoke.

Students and teachers should also feel free to post any questions they may have about tobacco as part of their entries and support those who are trying to quit.

Top school prize for the most registered members is $3,000 (i.e., funding for school equipment like computers). Top student prize for the most posts is a new laptop.

Visit www.smokershelp.net to get online and call 1-800-363-5864 for more information/contest rules.

Environmental Awards presented

The Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Awards have been presented to various individuals and groups across the province for their efforts to protect and preserve the environment.

Among the winners was Stephenville Primary School. The school was given an Honourable Mention in the School or Educational Institution category for its successful beverage container recycling program. As well, students participated in the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup. "Integrating this event with curriculum objectives that focus on ocean conservation and environmental awareness, teachers, parent volunteers and students from Stephenville Primary have taken these lessons into the community with great success," says Jill Benoit, primary teacher at Stephenville Primary who accepted the award on behalf of the school.

The Honourable Tom Osborne, Minister of Environment and Conservation, presents the Environmental Award to Stephenville Primary teacher, Jill Benoit.

The winners in the Youth or Youth Group category who tied for first place were Stephen Foster from Humber Elementary School in Corner Brook and Christopher Downey, Belanger Memorial High School in Doyles. Stephen and Christopher, with their dedicated teachers, are wonderful ambassadors for the environment.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Awards Program is a joint initiative of the Department of Environment and Conservation, Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes, and the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB). The Awards Program honours outstanding leaders in environment and conservation and are a public acknowledgement of the initiative, dedication and hard work that individuals, communities, schools and organizations have put into caring for our environment. Other winners for 2005 include: Diane Eastman, Carmanville; Project Green, MUN; MUN Botanical Garden; the Town of Botwood; and the Central Regional Integrated Health Authority.

Virtual exhibit launched

The virtual exhibit, Dr. Cluny Macpherson (1879-1966): Reflections of a Newfoundlander, was officially launched May 17. The exhibit, created by the Faculty of Medicine Founders' Archive (FMFA), contains the notebooks of Dr. Macpherson, who practised medicine in Newfoundland beginning in 1902 when he joined Dr. Wilfred Grenfell's Labrador Mission and took charge of the hospital in Battle Harbour, Labrador.

Dr. Cluny Macpherson (1879-1966)

Archivist Stephanie Harlick was responsible for creating the exhibit with financial support from the Department of Heritage through the Canadian Culture Online Program, Library and Archives Canada and the Canadian Council of Archives. The funding made it possible to digitize Dr. Cluny Macpherson's two notebooks, which were donated to the FMFA by Dean Emeritus Dr. Ian Rusted, and to make them available to the public in this virtual exhibit.

One of the features of the exhibit is the ability to do a word search and find material relevant to a query. For example, the enquiry for "gas mask" (invented by Dr. Macpherson) leads you to the pages in the notebooks where he wrote about this.

Dr. Macpherson first started compiling his notebooks during a hospital stay in 1936 in order to make use of his enforced leisure. He wrote, among other things, about his time in Gallipoli, his chance encounter with Alexander Graham Bell, and his 1902 expedition to bring the hospital steamer, the Julia Sheridan, from Battle Harbour in Labrador to St. Anthony on the island of Newfoundland.

The virtual exhibit was created with CONTENTdm, a versatile digital collection management software package designed to accommodate various types of virtual projects. The introductory pages were designed by the Faculty of Medicine's Health Sciences Information and Media Service (HSIMS) in consultation with the archivist. The Virtual Exhibit of the Diaries of Dr. Cluny Macpherson can be visited at www.med.mun.ca/macpherson/.

CANADA

National survey on hours of work and working conditions

According to the most recent national teacher survey, in comparison to four years ago, Canadian teachers are working longer hours and the conditions under which they work are making it increasingly difficult to maintain quality learning environments for students.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) released the preliminary findings of the survey at the federation's Annual General Meeting held in July.

Highlights of the survey include:

- The 2005 survey indicates that 83 per cent of Canadian teachers reported that they had a higher workload than four years ago. In 2001, 63 per cent of teachers reported an increase in their workload compared to the two years prior;
- Teachers report in 2005 that they work an average of 55.6 hours a week including assigned classroom instruction, course preparation, grading and reporting, individual help to students, meetings, parent interviews and supervision of students. In the 2001 survey, teachers reported an average work week of 51.8 hours;
- 51 per cent of teachers say their class sizes have grown over the last two years, with only 1 in 10 teachers reporting smaller class sizes;
- 74 per cent of teachers surveyed report an increase in the number of integrated, exceptional students in their class in the past two years.

CTF is the national voice of over 213,000 teachers across Canada. The survey involved 1,103 teachers in every province and territory and was conducted by Vector Research and Development Inc. in May 2005.

Education program for youth on alcohol advertising

The Media Awareness Network (MNet) has launched *The Target Is You!*, a new national education program for youth on alcohol advertising. This series of 10 lessons is designed to help young people understand the significant social and psychological effects of messages in alcohol advertising in influencing their attitudes about drinking.

The lesson plans, available free of charge on MNet's web site, are designed for students in Grades 4 to 11 and cover a range of alcohol advertising issues including the understanding of brands, alcohol ads and sports as well as messages about gender in alcohol ads.

"This program is extremely timely and relevant for today's teachers," said Winston Carter, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. "Canadian teachers have often called for classroom resources in order to instill in their students critical thinking skills to help them navigate our media rich environment. Kudos, once again, to MNet for providing teachers with the tools they need to tackle, in a proactive and effective manner, the issue of alcohol advertising."

Through this new program's media education approach to alcohol-related issues, teachers are presented with a powerful and engaging new tool to reach young people. As students deconstruct and think critically about messaging in alcohol ads and compare these messages to the real consequences of drinking, educators are provided with opportunities to help them better understand and contextualize all the factors that contribute to underage drinking habits.

The Target Is You! is available on MNet's Lesson Library at www.media-awareness.ca/english/teachers/.

MNet is a non-profit Canadian organization whose mission is to support and encourage media and Internet education, and its widest possible integration into Canadian schools, homes and communities. Its aim is to help children and youth to develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the media, the techniques used in creating media products, and the media's role and influence within society.

Education Week

Semaine de l'éducation

March 5-11, 2006

Celebrate and Participate

Célébration et participation

Sub-themes:

Healthy Living • Celebrating Culture • Technology • Environment • Peace

Resource helping the planet one classroom at a time

Discover opportunities to enhance your classroom by challenging your students to think critically about the environment, society and sustainability, and by supporting them in making the leap from ideas to action! All programs are curriculum-aligned; action-oriented; require minimal teacher preparation; and are free or low-cost!

Green Street links schools in Canada to reputable Environmental Education organizations across the country that offer a range of programs which include: discovering how to reduce your ecological footprint; learning how to build a wind turbine; letter writing with eco pen-pals; and understanding climate change. The program endeavors to provide opportunities that actively engage students and teachers in environmental learning and sustainability education.

To browse the selection of new and returning programs available for classrooms in Newfoundland and Labrador this year, visit www.green-street.ca. Green Street has recently added a Newfoundland program, Conservation Corps, to the roster, which is available to teachers free of charge. Registration for all programs can be completed online by logging on to Green Street, click on Teacher Zone, selecting elementary or secondary programs and scrolling through the various options to find the best programs to suit your classroom. And remember: as a teacher, you are welcome to register for more than one program!

The aim of Green Street is to deliver credible, accessible and affordable programs that are relevant to students' concerns, encourage a sense of personal responsibility for the environment, foster a commitment to sustainable living, and promote an enduring dedication to environmental stewardship.

You can also contact the Green Street Coordinator, Allison Freeman at afreeman@green-street.ca or call toll-free at 1-877-250-8201. Green Street is also available in French at www.marueverte.ca.

NORTH AMERICA

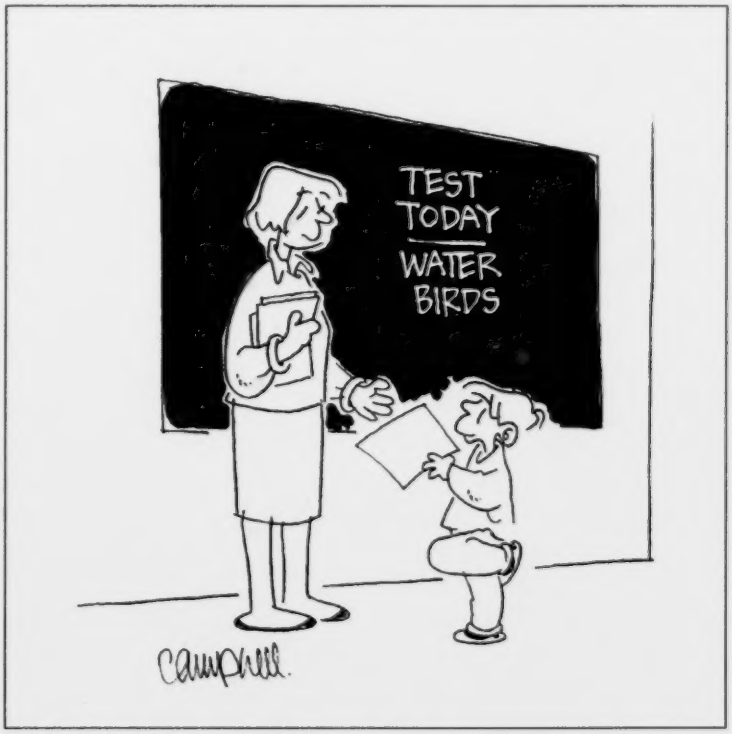
Free online geography project starts January 27

Classrooms in Grades 4 to 12 are invited to participate in Journey North's Mystery Class project in which students try to find ten secret classes hiding around the globe. The central clue is the changing amount of sunlight (photoperiod) at each site. Students first use only sunrise and sunset times, and later receive geographic and cultural clues about each site. In the meantime, they also track day length in their hometowns. On this inspiring ten-week journey, young geographers must use reasoning, graphing, and research skills to pinpoint exact locations of the mystery classes.

This investigation demonstrates that, as spring sweeps across the Northern Hemisphere, day length changes everywhere on earth. Students learn that this is related to the tilt of the earth's axis in relation to the sunlight striking the planet. They discover that this is what drives seasonal changes, which, in turn, affect the entire web of life. Students develop a deep grasp of these important concepts because they puzzle them out in real time as the project unfolds over two and a half months.

This is an excellent project to combine with the GEMS unit, *The Real Reasons for Seasons*.

To learn more and register to participate, visit www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/mclass/About.html. To learn about other Journey North spring projects – from monarch migrations to mapping challenges – visit www.learner.org/jnorth/.



CLYDE R. CRUMMEY, 1933-2004

Clyde grew up in Western Bay, Conception Bay and after completing Grade 11 in 1950, launched his teaching career. On completion of his first year teaching, he attended teacher training at Prince of Wales College in St. John's. This training continued for the next 20 years until he received his B.A. (Education) in 1970 and his B.A. in 1973. Clyde taught in various Newfoundland communities, including Garden Cove, Victoria, Buchan's, Curling, Summerside, Corner Brook, Carbonear, Western Bay and St. John's, from where he retired in 1988 after 38 years teaching.

Throughout his career, Clyde touched the lives of many. Colleagues, students and friends were influenced by his quiet sense of humour, his kindness, his teaching techniques, and above all else, his concept of fair play. His very presence in a classroom elicited the attention and respect of all students. His willingness to give special attention to those students with special needs was one of his strong points.

Clyde was a quiet, private individual who dealt with all life's experiences with a very positive attitude. When his cancer advanced, he accepted the treatments and side effects with the same dignity and courage that sustained him throughout his life.

James (Jim) Murphy

In addition to his love of teaching, the other joys of his life were his family – wife Ruth, daughter Ramona, son-in-law Tony, and precious granddaughter Bethany. He treasured his siblings, Helen, Art and Hollis and their families, as well as Ruth's family in Corner Brook.

After Clyde retired, bowling became an important part of his weekly activities and an opportunity to interact with former colleagues and form new friendships. It was not so much the activity but the social interaction that he enjoyed. He also volunteered with the U.C. Food Bank, giving years of devoted service.

Clyde had a great love and interest in music, and it played a vital role in soothing him as he dealt with his illness, displaying courage and stamina throughout this difficult time.

Gardening was also one of Clyde's passions. His nephew, Michael Crummey, summed it up very eloquently in his eulogy when he said, "Clyde loved to see things grow. His garden was a work of art, and that work was a spiritual thing for him. There is a clay tablet in Clyde's house that reads, 'You are nearer to God's heart in a garden.' He felt that! The garden was a place of solace and peace for him. It was part of what convinced him there was a God. That life could be a beautiful thing however many ugly things go on in the world. It was also a place that confirmed Clyde's own sense that there was a natural cycle to life that included death...even his own death. Ruth told me recently that he had no fear of dying. It won't ever make us miss him less of course. But I think he would want us to take comfort in knowing that."

Clyde will be forever missed by his relatives and friends. He was laid to rest at Western Bay on July 16, 2005.

(Submitted by friends on behalf of the family)

JAMES (JIM) MURPHY, 1952-2005

There are so many words to describe our dear friend – family man, kind, and thoughtful, comical, energetic, humanitarian, The Best. On August 27, 2005, our lives were changed forever with the loss of our dear friend, Jim Murphy. He was that special man who touched everyone whether you knew him for a few days or a lifetime. He left a lasting mark.

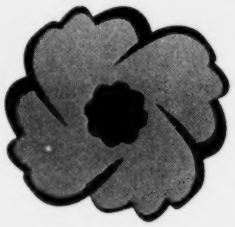
Jim began his teaching career in 1974-75 at St. Peter's in Jerseyside, Placentia Bay. He then taught at St. Bon's in St. John's from 1975-84. In 1984 he moved to St. Peter's Junior High (formerly known as St. Peter's Elementary) in Mount Pearl where he taught until he retired in 2004. Jim was very versatile and taught many areas of the junior high program. His many years in the classroom helped develop his expertise in dealing with all ages and abilities. During his teaching career, Jim was admired by his colleagues and students. This was evident every year when many of his former students, of all ages, returned to see Mr. Murphy.

With Jim's passing, our hearts feel empty but our memories are full of his antics, costumes, puns and countless acts of kindness. The spirit with which he embraced each day will be long remembered.

"Thank God for the teachers of our children, so the garden can grow." (from the song entitled *In The Garden* by Terry Kelly and Floyd King).

Our deepest sympathy is extended to his best friend and wife of 29 years, Cathy (Finn); his children, Craig, Karyn and Chris; his four brothers and three sisters; and his numerous nieces, nephews and special friends. We want them to know he touched many lives, made the days a little brighter and was loved by so many... A True Friend.

(Written by his friends Patty Clancy and Michelle Norman)



The Poppy
Questions & Answers

When can poppies be worn daily?

The official start of the Poppy Campaign is the last Friday in October. This year the campaign will run from October 25 to November 11. Presentations of the poppies to dignitaries – for example, the Governor General, the Lieutenant Governors and Premiers – are normally made in advance of the official campaign start date. The distribution of poppies to the general public commences on October 25 and can be worn at any time after that date.

Is it proper to wear a poppy to commemorative events at any point during the calendar year or should the poppy be worn only during the Poppy Campaign?

Although it is tradition for the Poppy to be worn only during the annual Remembrance period, a person may wear a Poppy any time he or she wishes to do so. It is not unusual for Poppies to be worn at commemorative events throughout the year, particularly during Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) pilgrimages. The best approach is to follow the lead of the event organizers. If you are organizing the event, you can seek advice from VAC senior officials or the Royal Canadian Legion.

Will Poppies with green centres be sold as well as Poppies with black centres?

The Royal Canadian Legion is changing the colour of the Poppy centre back to black, from the green centres used since 1980. Since this is a transition year, Poppies with green centres and black centres will be distributed this year. This is the last year that Poppies with green centres will be distributed.

How should the Poppy be worn?

The Royal Canadian Legion suggests that the Poppy be worn on the left lapel of a garment or as close to the heart as possible.

Poppy Facts

- During the Napoleonic Wars, the poppy drew attention as the mysterious flower that bloomed over the graves of fallen soldiers.
- In the 20th Century, the poppy again was widely noticed after soils in France and Belgium became rich in lime from rubble during the First World War. The little red flowers flourished around the graves of the war dead as they had 100 years earlier.
- In 1915, Guelph, Ontario native John McCrae, a doctor serving with the Canadian Forces Artillery, recorded this phenomenon in his famous poem *In Flanders Fields*.
- Two days before the Armistice, Moina Michael, an American woman from Athens, Georgia, read the McCrae poem and was inspired to wear a poppy year-round in memory of the war dead.
- In 1920, Madame E. Guérin of France visited the United States and happened to meet Miss Michael at the YMCA at Columbia University, where the latter was a volunteer. Madame Guérin then resolved to sell handmade poppies around Armistice Day to raise money for poor children in the war-torn areas of Europe.
- In 1921, Field-Marshall Earl Haig, the former Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France and Belgium and the principal founder of the British Legion, was sold on Madame Guérin's fundraising idea and approved organization of the British Poppy Day Appeal by the Legion to raise money for poor and disabled veterans.
- The same year, Madame Guérin visited Canada, and convinced the Great War Veterans Association (predecessor to the Royal Canadian Legion) to similarly adopt the poppy as a symbol of remembrance in aid of fundraising.
- Today, the Poppy Campaign is one of the Royal Canadian Legion's most important programs. The money raised from poppy sales provides direct assistance for ex-service people in financial distress, as well as funding for medical appliances and research, home services, care facilities, and numerous other purposes.

Article 22: Method of Payment

Begin Preparing for the "Three-Week Pay Period Gap"

by PERRY DOWNEY

I know that this topic is not one that you want to hear, however, it is one that we cannot avoid: the infamous "three-week pay period gap" that will occur in August 2006. The "three-week pay period gap" issue has been around since the 1988-90 collective agreement when teachers agreed through collective bargaining to change the method by which they receive their pay from a semi-monthly (paid on the 15th and last of every month) pay period to a bi-weekly (every two weeks) pay period. Since the 1988-90 Agreement, years in which a 27th pay period occurred have been very contentious for teachers. As a result, several attempts have been made by previous NLTA Negotiating Committees to address the issue in an attempt to find some form of relief for teachers. To date we have not been successful. The last time that a 27th pay period occurred was on August 31, 2000.

The three-week pay period gap occurs every five or six years, depending on where, during that period of time, the leap years fall. If we follow the bi-weekly pay period schedule from the 2001-02 school year onward, we will realize that the next 27... pay period date will once again occur during the upcoming 2005-06 school year on August 31, 2006. As a result, teachers will once again be faced with a three-week pay period gap for the period from August 17th to September 7th, 2006 and should therefore begin preparing for the effect.

During the 1988-90 round of negotiations, the provisions of the current Article 22: Method of Payment were negotiated. Clauses 22.01 and 22.02 states:

22.01: *Annual salary and allowances shall be paid in twenty-six (26) equal installments. In a school year in which payment in accordance with Clause 22.02 would yield twenty-seven (27) pay periods, the final pay period in August will be eliminated and each pay period in the subsequent year will occur one week earlier.*

22.02: *Teachers shall receive their pay cheques every second Thursday. If a holiday falls on Thursday, teachers will be paid on the last teaching day prior to that Thursday. If a holiday falls on Thursday during the months of July and August, teachers will be paid on the last banking day prior to that Thursday.*

Given the effect that a three-week pay period gap has on individual teachers and their families, teachers often ask the following questions:

1. Why does it (the additional one-week gap) occur?

Teachers are paid at two-week (14 day) intervals, 26 times per year, as per Clauses 22.01 and 22.02. These 26 intervals of 14 days each account for only 364 days of the year. Thus, there is essentially a day "left over" in a normal year and two such days "left over" in a leap year. Eventually, the accumulation of these "left over" days result in a situation whereby there would be 27 pay periods in a given school year.

Let us use a specific example. During the 1999-2000 school year the first pay period occurred on Thursday, September 1, 1999. That is, teachers received their first pay before school opened. If you continue through the 1999-2000 school year with teachers being paid every second week, the 25th pay period occurred on August 3, 2000 and the 26th pay period occurred on August 17, 2000. If the two-week cycle were continued, a 27th period would have occurred on August 31, 2000. Since a teacher is paid an annual salary divided into 26 equal installments on a bi-weekly basis, the collective agreement had to find some way of either avoiding the occurrence of that 27th pay period or reducing the other 26 pay periods by a sufficient amount in order to set aside enough money for a 27th pay period.

In the early 1980's, the teacher payroll system was switched from a semi-monthly (i.e. the 15th and the last of each month) to a bi-weekly (every second Thursday) system. As a result, the 1988-89 school year would have been the first year that the bi-weekly system would have resulted in a possible 27th pay period.

That issue was discussed during negotiations on the 1988-90 collective agreement and was resolved with the wording that you now see in Clause 22.01. During the 1988-90 round of negotiations, the employer's suggestion as a resolution to the 27th pay period issue was that, in any year when the bi-weekly periods would yield 27 pay periods, each teacher's annual salary would be divided by 27 instead of 26, giving the same annual salary for that school year. This, of course, would have resulted in each teacher's bi-weekly gross pay being reduced by approximately 3.7 percent for each pay period in that school year. That solution, in the opinion of the NLTA's Negotiating Committee, would not have been acceptable to teachers. After considerable discussion at the negotiating table, agreement was reached on the arrangement that we now find in Clause 22.01. This was voted on and accepted by teachers as part of the 1988-90 contract.

2. How often does it occur?

Using the method outlined in Clause 22.01, the 27th pay period is avoided by eliminating that final 27th pay period in August and allowing each pay period in the subsequent school year to occur one week earlier. For example, for the 2005-06 school year, August 31st, 2006 pay period will be the 27th pay period for the year. As a result, the next pay period (which would be the first pay period in the 2006-07 school year) would occur two weeks later on September 14, 2006. However, the procedure as outlined in Clause 22.01 eliminates the August 31st pay period and moves the September 14th pay period back to September 7th, leaving a three-week gap (August 17th to September 7th), instead of a four-week gap from August 17th to September 14th. That first pay period in September will then arrive earlier and earlier each subsequent school year until the year occurs when it falls back to August 31st once again.

In a regular 365 day year, the first September pay period would occur one day earlier each subsequent year, so it would take seven years before we once again reach the 27 pay period scenario. However, because of a leap year occurring every fourth year, the 27th pay period scenario occurs every five or six years, depending on when the leap years fall within the seven-year period. The next occasion would be August 2011.

Over the years, teachers have voiced their concerns and opinions regarding this issue; however, since the method of payment is a negotiated provision in both collective agreements, in order to change what is currently contained in Article 22, we would need to address it during a round of negotiations. A proposal for change was on the table during the 1998 round of collective bargaining and again during the 2001 round; however, the Association has not been successful in negotiating any changes to the current provision.

The Provincial Executive, during its June 2005 meeting, carried the following motion: *That the Association amend the opening package for the upcoming round of negotiations and attempt to eliminate the occurrence of a three-week gap in pay periods for teachers in the province for 2006 and future years.*

As a result of this motion, the Provincial Negotiating Team will once again attempt to address the concerns of teachers as they relate to the "three-week pay period gap". In the meantime, begin preparing for the three-week pay period gap. If we are successful in negotiating a change to the current arrangement during this round of bargaining, you would have already saved an extra week of salary and I'm sure that the extra money will come in handy.

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

The Use of Sick Leave After Childbirth

by STEFANIE TUFF

There have been previous articles in *The Bulletin* on the right of natural mothers to access paid sick leave benefits for a certain period of time following childbirth. The purpose of this article is to provide a brief update on the issue and to get the necessary information out to new teachers and those who might not have read the earlier articles.

Pursuant to Article 17 of the Provincial Collective Agreement (Article 28 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement) teachers are entitled to a period of up to 39 weeks of unpaid maternity/adoption/parental leave. For birth mothers, the normal practice had been to commence maternity leave as of the date of the baby's birth, then claim Employment Insurance (EI) maternity benefits for the first 15 weeks of leave and EI parental benefits for the rest of the period of leave (EI parental benefits may be used by either parent or split between them, up to a combined maximum of 35 weeks of benefits). The distinction between EI maternity and parental benefits is that the 15 weeks of maternity benefits are only available to natural mothers as they are intended to provide a specific period of time to allow for physical recovery from pregnancy and childbirth. Pregnant women who are unable to work due to illness, whether the illness is pregnancy related or not, may access their paid sick leave prior to commencing maternity leave or EI sickness benefits.

However, judicial and arbitration decisions in other Canadian jurisdictions have established that birth mothers are entitled to access any regular paid sick leave benefits available to them through their employment for a certain period of time following delivery. In Brooks v. Canada Safeway (1989), 59 D.L.R. (4th) 321, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that pregnancy and childbirth provide "a perfectly legitimate health-related reason for not working and as such should be compensated" by the employer's short term disability or paid sick leave plan. In a subsequent case involving the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Association, the Ontario Court of Appeal followed this reasoning and held that the provisions of a collective agreement prohibiting access to sick leave benefits for a period of time surrounding childbirth were discriminatory. The arbitrator in another case involving an Ontario school board went so far as to rule that birth mothers should be entitled to an automatic six week period of paid sick leave following delivery without the necessity of medical proof of illness.

In light of these decisions, the NLTA has taken the position that any teacher who gives birth is entitled to access paid sick leave for a certain period of time following the delivery of her baby, providing she has the necessary sick leave available and meets all other requirements of the Collective Agreement. This position was first communicated to teachers in the January/February 2003 edition of *The Bulletin*. Despite an initial negative reaction from some school districts, our experience has been mainly positive. Responses from school districts to these requests have been fairly consistent: teachers are being advised that, if they have the necessary medical documentation, paid sick leave for a reasonable recovery period following delivery will be approved. Teachers who wish to avail of this option should, when requesting maternity leave, inform their school districts that they plan to access paid sick leave for a reasonable recovery period following the birth and that a medical note for this period will be provided.

Of course, it is up to each individual teacher to decide if she wants to take advantage of this option. From a financial perspective, a period of sick leave at full pay is more attractive than EI benefits. However, teachers who are at an early stage in their careers or who otherwise do not have a lot of sick leave available, may feel it is more important to save their sick days in case of future illness. If you have any questions regarding this issue or require assistance in relation to a maternity/sick leave request, please contact an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Teachers Recognized for Contributions to Education

In May, the Asper Foundation recognized Keith Samuelson, a teacher at Prince of Wales Collegiate in St. John's, as an outstanding human rights educator. In a special ceremony, Mr. Moe Levy, Executive Director of The Asper Foundation presented Keith with a plaque of recognition. Mr. Levy commented... "Keith Samuelson is a wonderful example of how educators can make a tremendously positive difference in the lives of their students. The Foundation is recognizing Mr. Samuelson for his outstanding contribution to the area of human rights and Holocaust education and for his strong commitment to The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program."

l-r: Mr. Moe Levy, Executive Director of The Asper Foundation, presents Keith Samuelson with his plaque of recognition.

The ceremony marked the first time that The Asper Foundation has presented this plaque of recognition. Keith played an instrumental role in the participation of Prince of Wales Collegiate in The Asper Foundation Human Rights and Holocaust Studies Program, the first school from Newfoundland and Labrador to ever be involved in the program.

The Asper Foundation was formed in Winnipeg in 1983 to build upon the philanthropic objectives of Dr. Israel Asper and the Asper Family. The Foundation undertakes and develops major initiatives in the areas of culture, education, community development and human rights locally, nationally and internationally. More information on the Foundation can be found at www.asperfoundation.com.

Teachers, Chesley West and David Lawton from Macdonald Drive Junior High School in St. John's and Jamie Coady from Roncalli High in St. John's contribute their time and talents to meet the needs of students served by Historica programs. They have assisted Historica to improve the quality of history by organizing fairs in their schools. Chesley was awarded the Silver Level Historica Pin while David Lawton and Jamie Coady were awarded the Bronze Level Historica Pin at the closing ceremonies of the Avalon Regional Historica Fair held in May.

The Historica Fairs program is dedicated to engaging children in the exploration of our past. Historica is proud to work with local volunteer committees made up of educators, business people, museum and heritage groups who organize events and support students by providing materials and resources. By involving children and their communities in a celebration of our heritage, we can help build a more vibrant and responsible citizenry. Additional information on Heritage Fairs can be found on the Internet at www.heritage.k12.nf.ca and www.histori.ca.

l-r: Chesley West, Hon. Ed Roberts (Patron of the NL Historica Fairs), Jamie Coady, and David Lawton.

If You Want To Create Change, Complaining Doesn't Count!

by CLAUDETTE E S COOMBS

Have you ever felt tired of things being the way they are? You really want something to change but every day your dreams and expectations are once again dashed? Today looks just like yesterday except you are a little more disillusioned with the world? Well, if we don't like things as they are, then it is up to us to *do* something about them… and complaining doesn't count!

To create a different experience, whether at home, work or in our social lives, we must be proactive. It really is our responsibility to take control of the direction of our lives. We aren't interested in just having change happen in any direction; we want a specific result. The more clearly we define what we want, the greater our chances of developing a reasonable method for achieving it.

Common Complaints… Common Response

It isn't unusual to hear complaints about a lack of resources, a difficult colleague, unsupportive administration or an unsatisfying personal relationship. Some of these legitimate concerns require professional intervention to provide an effective resolution. Other issues include components well beyond personal control or influence, while still others are well within the realm of personal change. In each case we choose to do (or not do) something about the experience. Unfortunately, we often react to a negative situation by becoming angry. We don't like what has happened so we complain and become frustrated and angry as we think or talk about it. This presents a potential pitfall since we become so focused on the perceived unfairness that we don't make the effort to change the situation. This focus can also result in a great deal of conflict. We are in turmoil and we may then put blame on those around us. Obviously, this approach isn't working. It really is time for a change!

Check the mirror … Interpretation is everything!

Have you ever found yourself complaining about, or justifying, some behaviour depending on whether you are doing it or having it done unto you? The facts are the same, only the perspective and interpretation changes. An inconsiderate, dangerous driver may have cut us off in traffic, yet we may have pulled in front of a slow moving, inattentive driver who was holding up traffic flow. Something may have been added to the staff meeting agenda unnecessarily by someone with nothing better to do than listen to him/herself talk, or because "you" felt it was extremely important and always overlooked! Actions in themselves have meaning because we attribute an interpretation to them. If we aren't satisfied, we can choose to change the situation or the interpretation. That "dangerous" driver may be trying to get a sick baby to the hospital! That slow driver may have just witnessed a fatal accident!

How to create change…

To make our lives more enjoyable, we may need to make some significant changes in our attitudes and in our behaviours. Consider the following few points.

• *Select one area at a time.*

A magic wand to cure all ills would be wonderful. However, to avoid being overwhelmed in our real world, we need to take changes one issue at a time. Select a target issue and set a goal based on issues that are most urgent. It may be something causing you distress or requiring too much energy.

• *Make the plan manageable.*

Visualize a long-term, general goal for enhanced personal control and overall well-being. Use the big picture to motivate action but be sure to set single goals which are achievable and are clarified through a realistic plan. Do whatever you can to ensure that you set yourself up for success, not failure!

• *Gather your supports and resources. Seek the needed expertise.*

You may need to learn new skills, recruit a mentor or enlist a fan club to keep you on track. Whatever your requirements, ensure that they are in place before you attempt the change.

• *Regularly re-evaluate your strategy, actions and progress.*
The plan you initially dreamed of, prepared for and implemented may not be precisely suited to your current environment. Conditions, people or even your goals may have changed. Use this opportunity to celebrate progress and clarify any efforts which aren't working as intended. Revise the strategy to meet any new conditions or to adjust to your current experience and situation.

• *Acknowledge successes.*
Reaching a goal signifies the positive results of effective planning and committed action. Believing that our efforts actually achieve the desired outcome encourages us to engage in the process again, rather than abandon hope of things ever improving.

• *Select another area and keep the positive changes happening!*
When you feel comfortable with achieving your desired change, start working on the next issue. We are life-long learners and the aspiration to reach our capacity and to influence others positively is a journey which has fluid endpoints.

It's all about Choice
Making assumptions can prove to be dangerous to progress. This is especially true if the assumption is that someone else is responsible for change or that things will improve without our efforts. We each choose our response to what life offers. By choosing to complain we waste physical and emotional energy which could be better used to actively address issues or develop reasonable coping mechanisms. Despite life's difficulties, we can choose to enjoy life generally and celebrate something specific in each day.

Claudette Coombs is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact Claudette Coombs (ext. 242) or Marie Wall (ext. 265).

A Stitch In Time

by BEVERLEY PARK

Do you ever get tired of people telling you that you have to have a plan, you have to set long-term and short-term goals for where you want to be, financially, professionally, even personally? Stephen Covey reminds us that we should "begin with the end in mind" and his other axiom, "the main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing", encourages us not to get caught up in agendas that take us away from that which is most important. Both of these adages refer to the need for a sense of direction and clarity of purpose, of knowing where we want to go and what it is we want to do. Dr. Phil and Oprah and the other self-help gurus all have books encouraging us to set goals for ourselves and they even have "How To" books and programs to make sure we get it right. Frequently we are reminded about the bit from *Alice in Wonderland* where a confused Alice asks "Which way do I go from here?" and a bemused Cheshire Puss tells her "That very much depends on where you want to go."

At this point I bet you were thinking that I was about to dismiss all this nagging (oops, I mean advice!). Unfortunately, as teachers, we don't get much time to read the self help books, let alone watch Oprah or Dr. Phil. We're too often busy marking papers and assessing students' work and figuring out what we're going to do tomorrow and the next day and even next week. But this is a trap that we shouldn't fall into. If we do not have time to listen to the modern-day prophets, then we might recall our mother's advice. One lesson that I learned the hard way is "A stitch in time saves nine." Just as a few strategically-placed stitches can save you from the embarrassment of exposure, so too can some thoughtful consideration of what's around the corner. The "stitch" I refer to is a moment of reflection, or discussion with a colleague, with your school calendar in hand. It's as simple as setting up reminders for yourself about pending deadlines or special events that will require some advance preparation. About the time that this publication finds its way to the staff room you should be preparing for the all-important parent-teacher conferences. The following excerpt, adapted from the NLTA's *Handbook for Beginning Teachers*, is a quick reminder of some planning tips that you might consider before, during and after the conference. This will ensure that everybody (yourself included) gets the most out of meeting the "other" key people in your students' lives.

These conferences tie in with each reporting period, and are often arranged by appointment. If so, you will know in advance which parents you are about to see and can prepare appropriate material. If you do not have this advance notice, you must prepare your files so you can quickly access relevant information on all your students. Whatever the case, make sure that you are well prepared for this session.

Remember to always do your best to be comfortable and relaxed... and ensure that the parents who come to visit you and your classroom feel welcome and invited.

Before the Conference

- Before your first meeting with parents/guardians, review the academic record of the student and collect any incident reports you may have made.
- Be well prepared. Collect dated samples of student work completed throughout the term to show improvement or decline in quality. These will substantiate your evaluation, providing parents with clear examples of current work habits.
- Have on hand rubrics or scoring guides for any assignments which may be discussed.
- Ensure privacy.
- Have appointments posted outside the door and keep to the schedule; parents/guardians needing additional conference time should be invited to come at a later date.
- Provide chairs for parents who are waiting outside your classroom. Reading material is also appreciated by parents – a student newsletter or recent school newspaper, for instance.
- Prepare a conference form for record keeping to focus the discussion and to aid future conferences.
- Successful conferences deal with only a few issues because of time constraints; make sure you know what points you want to cover.

During the Conference

- Greet the parents/guardians at the door.
- Introduce yourself with a friendly voice, but keep opening comments to a minimum to allow for more discussion time.
- Even if a student has problems that you want to address, find some positive things to report, and start with those.
- Be clear and concise in your comments; be an attentive listener.
- In discussing a problem with parents, be sincere, truthful and objective; they will appreciate your integrity.
- Keep the parents/guardians involved by encouraging them to share pertinent information with you.
- Maintain the focus and keep the discussion on track.
- With the parents/guardians' help, develop some goals for the rest of the year.

Concluding the Conference

- Check that the parents/guardians have a clear understanding of what was discussed.
- Highlight the conclusions and the agreed-upon actions.
- If needed, set another date for further discussion.
- End as you began – on a positive note.
- Thank the parents/guardians and walk them to the door.
- Summarize the points covered and add them to your files.

Follow Up

- First things first! Take time to put your feet up, relax and congratulate yourself on a successful series of meetings.
- Soon after, send a note home thanking the parents/guardians for their time and interest.
- After a few weeks, phone them with a progress report.

The NLTA's *Handbook for Beginning Teachers* has more complete information, including what to do in the unlikely event that a parent becomes volatile. It also outlines a suggested format specifically for problem-solving conferences, both face-to-face and by telephone. Keep your needle threaded!

Beverley Park is an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.

Loon Lake Science Camp for Teachers

Rekindle Your Interest in Science

by CATHERINE PHILLIPS

Nestled in the woods just east of Maple Ridge, British Columbia, lies Loon Lake. Loon Lake… just the name conjures up images of a serene lake… tall evergreens reflecting in the still water… fresh air. That is exactly the setting of the most wonderful professional development session I have attended in my 23 years of teaching.

Teachers from all over Canada came together in a very relaxed atmosphere for five days of Science exploration and investigation, great food, and fun! If you feel intimidated by Science, not to worry! The activities presented in each workshop were not daunting. Even if you were panic-stricken by Science you would enjoy this outstanding program.

Each day we attended three different workshops. A different facilitator, each with a particular area of expertise, ran each workshop. The facilitators are all employed in various scientific capacities in and around the Vancouver area. It is obvious that they love what they do. They passed on their enthusiasm for Science, inquiry and learning throughout the week. The workshops, even though they did not all apply to my particular grade level, were all well organized, informative, entertaining and practical.

Teachers enjoy an afternoon of rock climing during one of the camp's many activities.

The workshops this year included:

• Motion – While learning the principles of motion such as force, momentum and inertia, we learned to make spin tops out of Lego blocks and also how to spin a plate on the top of a wooden dowel.

• Building Structures – During this workshop, the focus was on how triangles are stronger and can bear more weight than can a square. We did two amazing activities that really demonstrated the strength of the triangle. In one of the activities we created a geodesic dome out of rolled newspaper and tape.

Participants sit under a geodesic dome made of rolled newspaper and tape.

• Water – In this session we explored the water cycle through drama and water conservation using simple, everyday materials to create props and excellent visuals.

• The Science of Harry Potter – This session was very entertaining. During this session we had to dissect owl pellets. Our pellet contained the intact skeleton of the wingspan of a small bird. We also completed activities on chemical changes during this workshop.

• A guest introduced us to the topic of a Math Trail. The goal of the Math Trail was to take mathematical concepts such as estimation, non-standard units of measurement, counting, patterns and shapes out of the classroom into the environment.

• Building a canoe out of a sheet of cardboard and tape – One of the highlights of the trip was making a boat. All we were given was a 4 foot x 8 foot sheet of cardboard, an exacto knife, a marker and a roll of packing tape. Working in groups of four we had a half hour to plan and create a seaworthy vessel. One member of the team had to get in the boat and paddle to a buoy in the lake. It was hilarious watching many of the boats capsize or sink not 10 feet from shore.

Catherine's group entry in the cardboard boat regatta.

Each workshop was activity based. I came away from each workshop with practical, inexpensive and fun activities that could be easily implemented in my Science class.

During the late afternoon and early evening there was a wide variety of activities planned which included hikes, walks, swimming, canoeing, wall climbing and wood working. There was truly something of interest for everyone.

Later in the evening, after the evening meal, guest lecturers were invited to the camp to make teachers aware of different programs and initiatives in which schools can be involved. These sessions were again activity based. One night we went on an 'insect hunt' while another night we had to build a model car using gears, axels and batteries.

Teachers who are not the rugged, outdoor type need not be deterred from applying to attend Loon Lake Science Camp for Teachers. Most participants were housed in cabins with indoor plumbing and showers. Most rooms or cabins contained several sets of bunk beds.

The camp employed a top-notch kitchen staff who created mouth-watering meals three times a day. The meals were delicious! The variety and quality of the food was amazing. Meals were served in a buffet format – all you can eat!

At the end of each day we held a campfire. A few drinks, stories and songs were shared in the amphitheatre. During the final night, each 'cabin' had to perform a song, poem or short skit about their experiences in Loon Lake. The entertainment was hilarious. The instructors started with an original ballet entitled "Loon Lake". The 'loonacy' continued throughout the night culminating in a sing-along with a very lively and entertaining local musician.

Above all, having the opportunity to meet teachers from all over Canada to share ideas, discuss common concerns and to forge new friendships was the highlight of the trip.

This experience will rekindle or inspire your interest in Science. Regardless of your degree of Science expertise, Loon Lake Science Camp for Teachers will definitely provide you with the ideas, resources and activities to spark students' interest in Science and also to encourage reluctant learners. I would highly recommend The Loon Lake Science Camp to all teachers. This camp truly offers something for everyone!

Catherine Phillips is a Grade 6 Intensive French teacher at Virginia Park Elementary in St. John's.

Professional Development – Made to Fit!

by BEVERLEY PARK

"If it doesn't work for something as simple as pantyhose, why would we assume it to be a good approach to something as complex as PD?"

October 5 was a day for us, not just here in Newfoundland and Labrador, but across Canada and in 72 countries around the world. It was World Teachers Day. Working in the professional development division of the Association I was particularly pleased with the theme for this year: *Professional Development to meet the needs of a changing world.* This theme recognizes the importance of ongoing and continuing professional development and the dedication of teachers to increase their understanding of teaching and learning, and to broaden their knowledge to provide quality education for all. Both CTF President, Winston Carter, and NLTA President, Kevin Foley, issued news releases to alert media to the event and noted that teachers everywhere believe in the need for continued renewal of knowledge and expertise through a diversity of approaches, processes and technologies.

As I read the releases I was struck by the phrase "diversity of approaches, processes and technologies." It occurred to me that too often people equate professional development with "workshop" or "inservice" and we often hear the phrase "PD day" on those morning radio announcements for school closures. Frequently the PD day represents an inconvenience for parents and leaves some teachers feeling as though they are being held hostage. I know. I have been the person standing in the front of the room conducting the workshop that the "majority" of the staff wanted, while the not-so-silent minority participates grudgingly at best. It is understandable that this might happen on occasion, and it is fitting at times to have all teachers on a staff, or in a group of schools, have a common PD experience. However, the one-size-fits-all approach should not be the norm. If it doesn't work for something as simple as pantyhose, why would we assume it to be a good approach to something as complex as PD?

It occurred to me that teachers may not be aware of their options. So, since there are entire stores devoted to hosiery, and one can browse through selections of sizes, colours, deniers, weaves and more, I thought it would be useful to give teachers a chance to browse some options for PD – beyond the workshop! Timing is everything, and as I was about to compose my list of alternatives, in a rare moment of procrastination, I started thumbing through the latest copy of the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) publication, *The Learning Principal*. An article by Joan Richardson was devoted to expanding one's vision of professional development. With permission, I have selected some of what I would consider to be the more interesting options from the 45-item list she provided.

If Not a Workshop, Then What?

- Planning lessons with a teaching colleague
- Leading a book study
- Making a field trip to another school or district
- Doing a classroom walk-through
- Leading a school-wide committee or project
- Being a mentor – being mentored
- Writing an article about your work
- Reading journals, educational magazines, books
- Keeping a reflective log or journal
- Viewing educational videos
- Observing other teachers teach
- Being observed and receiving feedback from another teacher or principal

Many things we do, including some of the above, are developmental and contribute significantly to our growth as teachers, yet we do not always recognize their value as professional development. They may challenge us more than the average workshop…and what is more challenging than observing another teacher or being observed as you practice your craft. Aside from the issue of sorting out the logistics, there are larger considerations of professional culture. In addition to the options that are linked to school and within the educational context, I would also add many others. I know that a good novel which inspires us to think differently or a travel experience that exposes us to a new way of seeing the world and enlarges our horizons are valuable not only as personal experiences, but they can also enhance the way we practice our profession. I encourage you to take ownership of your PD. Try something new. I can't promise that any of these will be "slimming" or give you a "booty boost" (yes, I did see that on a pantyhose package!) but they promise something more – that they will help us meet the needs of a changing world! Who could want more?

Applying for Educational Leave

Academic Year 2006-07

Article 20 in the Collective Agreement (Article 31 in the Labrador West Agreement) establishes the parameters for paid educational leave. A "leave" is defined as one full university semester, with the exception of the spring semester/third term (May-June), which is considered a half-leave. While on paid educational leave, teachers receive 80 percent of their salary for the number of days their school is open during the university semester, plus two days before the semester begins and two days after it ends. This is to accomodate travel or other demands related to the educational leave. Thus, teachers may have to return to school prior to or after educational leave in any school term to avoid further loss of pay.

There are a total of **62.5** leaves available for teachers covered under the Provincial Collective Agreement; there are **3** leaves available for those teachers covered under the Labrador West Collective Agreement.

The Application Process:

- Teachers must be employed in this province for five years or more (by the end June 2006) to be eligible for paid educational leave for the 2006-07 school year.
- Application is made **to the District.**
- Districts may rank applications according to District needs.
- Districts must forward applications to the Department of Education by February 1.
- **DISTRICTS OFTEN HAVE AN EARLIER DEADLINE. CHECK WITH YOUR DISTRICT OFFICE.**
- **Applications received after February 1 will not be considered.**

The Decision-Making Process:

- A committee with representation from the Department of Education, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association makes decisions on granting of awards.
- The committee makes its selections by March 1 of each year.
- Successful applicants are notified by March 30 by the Committee Chair, Mr. Gary Hatcher.
- In making its decision, the Committee considers several criteria including, but not limited to:
  - ✓ Whether the applicant has had paid leave in the past.
  - ✓ Current certificate level.
  - ✓ Whether study during leave will lead to a certificate upgrade.
  - ✓ Whether the applicant's job is at risk without re-training/upgrading.
  - ✓ The educational needs of the District and rankings as recommended by the Director.
  - ✓ Program of study (teacher supply and demand/program restrictions).*

No one factor of those listed in the above criteria dominates the Committee's final decision. Each member of the Committee, after thorough discussion of all the factors and after reviewing in detail the information on each applicant, has input to the final selection. Every effort is made to apply the criterion in a consistent fashion, and some aspects of the procedure may be computer assisted.

***If a successful applicant changes his/her planned program of study from that indicated on the original application, the application must be reconsidered by the Selection Committee.**

NOTE TO TEACHERS:
The full text on the NLTA policy regarding the awarding of Educational Leave as well as the Educational Leave Application Form can be found on the NLTA website (www.nlta.nl.ca). A link on the main page called **"Forms Online"** will bring you to the applicable form and policy. Please note that the application form **must be forwarded to your School District** and from there it will be forwarded to: *Mr. Gary Hatcher, Senior Director, School Services and Facilities, Department of Education, Confederation Building, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NL, A1B 4J6.* Application must be received at the Department of Education by **FEBRUARY 1, 2006**. ***Districts often have an earlier deadline. Check with your district office.***

Hello Carl, Good-bye Bunga

by JEAN LINK

Remember Bunga? It's hard to believe there might be a baby boomer in this province who doesn't. Just as the *Royal Crown Reader* has a place of honor on the shelves of our parents, so too has *Grade Four Geography* achieved some distinction amongst those of us in our 40's or 50's, and Bunga, the little Malaysian pygmy who ate yams, is the star by popular choice.

I recently came across Carl Leggo's poem, *Grade Four Geography*. I had never read the selection before and was delighted to reacquaint myself with an old school chum. Bunga had actually made it into a poem.

In grade four geography
I learned about Bunga
the Malaysian Pygmy
who ate yams,
but I never learned
what Bunga learned
about Carl the Newfoundlander
who ate the tongues
of cod dipped
in milk, rolled
in flour, grilled,
light brown, crisp.

In grade four geography
I never saw Bunga
looking back at me,
perhaps asking,
How can he eat
those tongues?

View From My Mother's House, Killick Press, 1999

As with any poem that captures my fancy, I read it a second time and a third. It became apparent that the message here had more to do with the exploration of cultural stereotyping than the creation of nostalgic wanderings amongst its readers, yet as Leggo wondered, I wondered, too.

My thoughts took a somewhat different path and it was the absence of Newfoundland literature in my own schooling that gave pause for thought. At the age of ten, I knew little of stereotyping, less of culture. But I did like stories. Few and far between were stories of Newfoundland and Labrador. They weren't there in Grade 4, and they weren't there in Grade 11. Little wonder Bunga learned nothing of Carl; we learned little of Carl ourselves, stereotyped or otherwise.

"Preserving the stories of our parents and grandparents is a responsibility we should not take lightly. What better way to honor that responsibility than through the literature we offer our children."

Newfoundland and Labrador is rich with history, a cliché no doubt, but the statement is so heavy with proofs and truths that it easily overrides the cliché. P.K. Devine, in his novel *The Good Old Days*, encourages us to treasure the traditions of our ancestors with pride. "Traditions are the very cornerstone of nationality and patriotism, and once a country allows them to become dead and inoperative in the body politic, that country's greatest asset, from a national standpoint, is gone forever." There is little left of traditional Newfoundland that is tangible. Preserving the stories of our parents and grandparents is a responsibility we should not take lightly. What better way to honor that responsibility than through the literature we offer our children?

If you explore the provincial government website, it would appear there is a growing commitment to improving the quality of education we offer the students of this province. There are many who would jump to challenge that commitment. There are not enough schools, not enough teachers, not enough resources, and never enough money.

There may be truth here. But there are other truths. What fires a child's imagination is not always found in the expenditures column. It is the curriculum, and literature in particular, that stokes the fire.

We continue to embrace the classics. You will recognize many of the novels and plays your child studies. You once studied them yourself and that you still remember the odd line or phrase gives credence to the often-expressed sentiment that good literature is timeless. We have opened our classroom doors to quality Canadian literature, acknowledging both the diverse and distinct cultures that make this country great and the ability of our own to create an art form worthy of study. But it is the presence of Carl with his cod tongues that pleases me most. A stereotype? Maybe. But in opening our doors to Carl, we have invited in so many other characters who have shaped the Newfoundland and Labrador history and the Newfoundland and Labrador heart. They are found in the anthologies and the novels our children study. Unique and individual, they have a story to tell. It is our story.

Teachers are often given a choice as to the novels they include in their courses. Hats off to those who choose to teach Newfoundland and Labrador literature, knowing full well their students have not had access to preparatory or supportive courses in local history, knowing full well there are no commercially prepared study guides to direct their teaching. It would be so much easier to go with the tried and true, yet these educators recognize that they not only teach literature and history; they teach an understanding of identity; they provide our children with the link to their past necessary to shape their future. Perhaps you can tuck this Senegalese saying in with those odd lines and phrases you have committed to memory: "In the end we will conserve only what we love. We love only what we understand. And we will understand only what we are taught."

Hello Carl. Good-bye Bunga.

Jean Link is a Grade 7 and 8 English and Senior High Special Education teacher at New World Island Academy in Summerford.

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

Professional Development Programs

Professional Development Fund for Out-of-Province Travel

DEADLINE DATES: THIRD THURSDAY IN SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER, JANUARY, MARCH & MAY

Centennial Funds and Awards

Centennial Study Award
DEADLINE DATE: MARCH 31

Centennial Project Award
DEADLINE DATE: ONGOING THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR

Educational Research Award
DEADLINE DATE: ONGOING THROUGHOUT SCHOOL YEAR

International Conference Presenters Program
DEADLINE DATE: NOT LATER THAN MARCH 31

International Programs Award

Equity Issues Programs for Students
DEADLINE DATE: OCTOBER 31

Note: Grants **will not** be awarded retroactively.

Teachers Talking to Teachers Program

Johnson Bursaries
DEADLINE DATE: APRIL 1

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ANY OF THE ABOVE PROGRAMS, PLEASE CONTACT:

Professional Development Division
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599 (toll free)
Fax: 726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll free)
Beverley Park, ext. 244, René Wicks, ext. 245, Susan Cardoulis, ext. 246

The Challenges of Beginning Female Administrators

by NORMA G. WELLS

In Newfoundland and Labrador in 2004-05, 34% of the principals and vice-principals were women in a province where more than 60% of the teachers are women. The dominant presence of women in education leaves many to ponder the reasons that so few of these females actually take their careers any farther than their classrooms.

Overcoming the Hurdles

There are many factors that help explain the small number of female leaders in our schools.

Sex-Role Stereotyping. The sheer fact that women bear children supports patriarchal systems of domination. The structure of the school has largely resembled the home where the men were the head of the household and the women nurtured the children. In a similar way, men are the head of the schools and women are in the classrooms in a direct nurturing relationship with the children.

Discrimination. Although there are many who believe that men have assumed the leadership positions simply because they can do the job better, research points to studies that show that women can actually do the job as well or better than their male counterparts. Women administrators improve performance on the part of students as well as teachers.

Lack of Self-Confidence. Women can be their own worst enemies. They simply have not been applying for leadership positions to the same extent that men have. Traditionally, they have been afraid to take risks and have contented themselves to stay in their classrooms where they can maintain a balance between career and family.

By contrast, some researchers have found that females have particular strength in nurturing, cooperating, seeing things in connections, and not getting hung up on protocol – exactly the traits that are required to be a successful contemporary principal. The lack of self-confidence, then, is definitely unfounded.

Other Obstacles

According to one study, men generally do not select women as protégés even though the value and importance of mentoring have been widely documented. It is difficult for a female to acquire a female mentor since there are so few females in administration. Surprisingly, female administrators are not always willing to mentor other women.

It is my opinion that family responsibilities are the single biggest obstacle to would-be female administrators today. Women are usually the primary caregivers to their children, especially in the formative years. As such, they do not want to – and many simply cannot – take a position that requires the enormous amount of time and dedication of a principalship. It is usually only after the children are older or grown that a mother chooses a school leadership position.

Studies of the juxtaposition of career and family point out that fewer married women achieve high academic rank than married men; men are more successful in combining parenthood and academic careers; the majority of female administrators remain childless; and the more children a woman has, the more difficult it is to balance family and career.

Once She Makes It To The Principal's Chair

Male or female, the first year of the principalship is the most challenging. Novices have yet to establish firm relationships and gain credibility with staff, parents, and district office. As a result, they are blanketed by loneliness and a nagging fear of failure. Many new principals are surprised to discover the amount of work and time required of them. Many feel unprepared for the multitude of roles and responsibilities that come with the principalship: administrative tasks, working with parents, district office requests and paperwork, and personal skills. These experiences, coupled with being a woman, can make the initial years as a principal even more difficult.

A British Columbia study found there were many negative consequences of being a female principal.

She received little career-building support, and was excluded from the old-boys' network. She had to contend with male colleagues' negative reactions to her and with harassment by them. She had to work harder to become a principal and had to continue to prove herself once there.

Some strategies that women use to respond to the challenges of their careers are working harder and identifying with male rather than female professionals. In fact, most women rely on the first of these strategies. They work harder and longer, often to the point of sleep deprivation that can ultimately lead to physical and mental health problems.

Groundbreaking Women

Groundbreaking women share 11 common characteristics. These women are the first in their field to accomplish a particular position, honour or skill; they also inspire other women to do the same. They are resilient or courageous, visionary, self-efficacious, persistent, passionate about their work, intellectually advanced, have a mission to make a difference, value education, believe in family first, advocate for the underrepresented, and are recognized by society as role models. This set of characteristics can be the basis for professional development for female aspirants who wish to break the glass ceilings and enter the uncharted territory of school leadership roles.

Leadership courses and professional development can facilitate the development of women as leaders through (a) inspiration, (b) development of character traits, (c) connections and networking, and (d) high expectations of achievement.

Just the knowledge of other women who have gone before them and succeeded can provide the inspiration to many females who are contemplating the leadership route. By raising the level of awareness of the many women who have been successful, often despite all odds, other women will be inspired to not just become as good as the male heroes they have always known of, but in many cases, better.

Conclusions and Implications

There is an obvious need for current educational leadership programs to include both personal skill and character building in their programs though efforts such as professional development seminars, university course work and training centers. The program needs to go beyond teaching concepts and their application to the personal development of each graduate student, individually, based on their identified needs.

Maternity leave policies in some parts of Canada have improved in recent years. Human Resources Development Canada now provides a parent (often a woman) with up to 50 weeks of employment insurance benefits. While this increase is a start, it is not enough. Although the length of the leave has been extended, there is still a maximum benefit that a woman can receive. This maximum benefit amounts to little more than half an administrator's salary. This drastic reduction in income significantly alters a woman's ability to meet her financial commitments. In essence, this punishes the woman for having had a baby. Moreover, the time she spends on maternity leave does not accrue pensionable service. This loss of service time means she will have to either buy back the pensionable service time (on a reduced salary!) or work later in years to make up for this lost time. Again, it seems her career has to suffer in order for her to have children.

Some school boards and some province's Departments of Education, like Manitoba, for example, subsidize maternity leave benefits from HRDC up to 95% of a teacher's regular salary for 17 weeks; Newfoundland and Labrador has not yet done so. This salary supplementation is another strategy that would improve the plight of women aspiring to school leadership roles and women in general.

Research clearly indicates that women can be as successful and effective school principals as men. Yet there are so few of them. Some of the challenges that a woman faces, like responding to the needs of her family and children, simply cannot be removed; she needs to be creative and use all available resources to find ways around those. Other obstacles, such as discrimination and stereotyping, are gradually disappearing, and with further education of society in general, should one day be virtually non-existent.

The number of female administrators is also slowly but steadily climbing. As this happens, more and more females will look to these women for inspiration and mentoring and as leaders to be modeled.

"The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality. The last is to say thank you. In between the two, the leader must become a servant and a debtor. That sums up the progress of an artful leader (DePree, 1989, p. 11)." The leader's gender is really irrelevant!

Norma Wells is a teacher at Templeton Academy in Meadows. This article is a synthesis of her final research project in her Masters of Education (Leadership Studies) program from MUN. Coincidentally, Norma is currently on maternity leave. Click here to view entire paper. Norma also welcomes comments at schoolhouse@personainternet.com.

Deconstructing Online Hate

by ANNE TAYLOR

Young people are often naïve and easily brainwashed by racist propaganda because they don't have the experience or facts at hand to refute the lies and myths being fed to them.

Lonely, marginalized youth seeking a sense of identity and belonging are both the most attractive targets for racists and their most useful tools once recruited.

B'Nai Brith Canada

"The Internet... has an unkind side that offers an array of spiteful content directed not only at minorities, but at any person or group unlucky enough to be a target."

Until recently, addressing hate propaganda and its potential effects on young people has not been high on the agenda of Canadian educators. School authorities are usually aware when print-based hate propaganda is distributed in or near school property; and apart from the James Keegstra affair in the mid-eighties, hate propaganda has not been a huge problem for Canadian schools.

But things are changing. Hate mongers can now reach millions quickly, cheaply and in a multitude of ways through the Internet. They can bring unsuspecting kids to their websites by tagging the sites with unrelated key words which are picked up by search engines. They can recruit new blood by infiltrating sites and chat rooms that are popular with kids. They can use the Net's interactivity to gather personal information and foster relationships. And by doing these things, they manage to create the illusion, in certain online communities, that hate is legitimate and widespread.

More worrisome for educators and parents is the "underground" nature of online hate. Yes, it's there on the Net for all to see, but Media Awareness Network's survey of 6,000 Canadian students in 2001 showed that of the 20% of students who had encountered a hateful website, only 4% told an adult about it. MNet's survey also showed that 85 per cent of 9- to 17-year-olds were online alone "all" or "most" of the time – meaning that kids can be encountering hate and absorbing its messages entirely without parental knowledge.

The Spectrum of Hate

Hate propaganda is, in fact, the far end of a whole spectrum of harmful online content that can engage young people and, with repeated exposure, desensitize them to virulent images and messages on the Web. The Internet, for all its advantages, has an unkind side that offers an array of spiteful content directed not only at minorities, but at any person or group unlucky enough to be a target. Much of this content is simply mean-spirited, usually bolstered by satire and humour – a natural off-shoot of the put-down trend in popular culture.

Sites like <fugly.com> or <bored.com> engage in racist satire and ethnic or gay bashing in a cool, supercilious, in-your-face manner. Such sites, and their so-called humour, are a challenge for young people, who are just figuring out their own sense of worth and sexuality. This is particularly so for those who find themselves on the margins of teen society, whose personal sense of inferiority can make them particularly receptive to disparaging or degrading messages about "the other." "Othering," as it is known, is a foundation of hate. It is also a way of handling insecurities and discomfort with differences, and maintaining the superiority of one's own group. As educators are well aware, this climate of unkindness may also reverberate in young people's own online communication, where a sense of anonymity and disconnectedness tends to minimize apathy and up the ante for aggressive, insulting communication.

A Fine Line

There's a fine line between the mocking, nasty or violent messages of these kinds of websites and those of organized hate groups like SixthSunRising, the Ku Klux Klan or Stormfront. Hate, in the criminal sense, is not always easy to recognize. It can pop up in all kinds of places – in websites, chat rooms, blogs, e-mail, games and music. The website, www.martinlutherking.org, is the kind of site students might bring up in a search for a Black History Month project, for

example. Despite its respectable domain name, the site is, in fact, a potent brew of racism, anti-Semitism and Communist conspiracy theories – all in the guise of historical data. A number of white supremacist groups host music sites, like Resistance Records ("pro-white CDs", "Love Your Race") to attract young people surfing the Net. Others encode their blogs or chat rooms with key words such as "hockey," "Christmas," "games" and "basketball," that will guarantee a daily supply of young surfers. Clearly, filters can't protect young people from this insidious activity.

Developing Personal Filters

What can help to protect them is knowledge and a sharp eye – filters in their own heads, so to speak – so that they can recognize online hate and see it for what it is, whenever and wherever they encounter it.

As their use of the Internet grows, the risk of students accidentally encountering hate material increases. So it's more important than ever for young people to understand that the Internet has no gatekeepers and that anyone and everyone can post their views. The ability to discriminate between biased prejudicial material, and fair and accurate information has become a basic life skill.

Curriculum Connections

Deconstructing hate messages and "reading between the lines" is a fascinating critical thinking exercise, and it's one that fits squarely into Language Arts and Social Studies curricula. It can involve: an analysis of bias, language, logical fallacies, symbols and the difference between fact and opinion; a scrutiny of propaganda techniques (such as the use of religious sanction and scientific authority, national pride or fear-mongering); and an examination of our own history and the roles that propaganda, discrimination and the scapegoating of minority groups have played. It can also include teaching kids practical skills for authenticating online information, through author searches, URL analysis and Web link searches that reveal which sites link to a certain site.

If students are able to recognize and deconstruct the messages of hate that come their way, much of the messages' power is reduced. Critical thinking skills are key to protecting kids from misinformation; and addressing online hate head-on is an essential part of any anti-racism program.

Media Awareness Network offers teaching resources on bias, propaganda, logical fallacies, and online hate (www.media-awareness.ca). For secondary lesson plans on these topics, check out "Online Hate" in MNet's "Lesson Library, For Teachers" section. For background essays, go to *Media Issues, Online Hate*. Follow the links from *Games for Kids* on the main page to access *Allies and Aliens*, an interactive module for students in Grades 7 and 8. For MNet's professional development workshop and self-directed PD tutorial, *Deconstructing Online Hate*, contact licensing@media-awareness.ca.

Anne Taylor is the former Director of Marketing with the Media Awareness Network in Ottawa, Ontario.

HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES

STUDENT-GENERATED HATE ON PERSONAL WEB SITES.

Kids feel anonymous on the Web and this can lead to irresponsible behaviour. We think conveying the concept of accountability on the Net is one of the big challenges for educators. Home, school and community police are going to have to work together to encourage and enforce young people's accountability on line.

INTERACTIVITY, ETHICS, AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S INTERNET USE, INCLUDING ANONYMITY.

The absence of face-to-face cues that decrease empathy for others; technology doesn't provide tangible feedback about the consequences of actions on others. Secondly, technology allows us to be invisible. If a person can't be identified with an action, then fear of punishment is unlikely. In the physical world, there are often "fixed consequences" to their behaviours, online young people can try something and move away from it, fast.

BECAUSE BULLIES TEND TO HARASS THEIR VICTIMS AWAY FROM THE WATCHFUL EYES OF ADULTS, THE INTERNET IS THE PERFECT TOOL FOR REACHING OTHERS ANONYMOUSLY – ANYTIME, ANYPLACE.

The popular Rate My Teacher site invites students to rate teachers on a scale of one to five and then add comments. While some of the comments are positive, others are insulting, even hateful – and all are anonymous.

OF THE 22 PER CENT OF CANADIAN KIDS WHO HAVE THEIR OWN WEBSITES, 12 PER CENT SAY THEIR SITE CONTAINS RUDE OR INSULTING REMARKS ABOUT SOMEONE, AND 46 PER CENT SAY THEY HAVE NOT SHOWN THEIR SITE TO A PARENT OR TEACHER.

- Under the Criminal Code of Canada, it is a crime to communicate repeatedly with someone if your communication causes them to fear for their own safety or the safety of others.
- It's also a crime to publish a "defamatory libel" – writing something that is designed to insult a person or likely to injure a person's reputation by exposing him or her to hatred, contempt or ridicule.
- A cyber bully may also be violating the Canadian Human Rights Act, if he or she spreads hate or discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or disability.

SHARING OUR CULTURES/
À LA DÉCOUVERTE DE NOS CULTURES
March 19-21, 2006 (St. John's)
May 7-8, 2006 (Clarenville)
This is a unique opportunity for K-12 teachers and their students (Grades 4-12 in Clarenville) to experience a bilingual, interactive, curriculum-relevant, and hands-on approach to learning about diverse cultures. The Fair showcases 25+ countries and 20+ exhibits by government and community organizations. Admission is free but space is limited. Registration deadline is December 9, 2005. For information contact Lloydetta Quaicoe, Tel: 709-727-2372 or Quaicoe@gmail.com.

SAC CONFERENCE 2006
May 31 - June 2, 2006
Gander Hotel. Theme: *Leadership – A Risky Business*. For more information contact: Wade Verge, Tel: 709-256-3931, E-mail: wadeverge@ncsd.ca; or Ellis Pope, Tel: 709-261-2360, E-mail: epope@ncsd.ca.

Dates to Remember

December 2005

Dec 1-2	Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
Dec 15	**Department Deadline:** Teacher Exchange applications to Ontario

January 2006

Jan 15	**Deadline:** Receipt of Barnes, Bancroft, Allan Bishop, and Special Recognition Award Nominations at the NLTA office
Jan 19	**Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications
Jan 27-28	NLTA Executive Meeting

February 2006

Feb 1	**Deadline:** Applications for Educational Leave - teachers must make prior application to school district
Feb 14	Janeway Day in the Schools

NLTA AWARDS 2005-06

Is There a Potential Winner in Your School?

If you feel someone within your school qualifies for nomination for one of these prestigious NLTA awards for the 2005-06 school year, please contact your school representative who will forward the name and information to your branch president or the appropriate special interest council president.

Special Recognition Award

This award is presented annually to an active member of the Association who, while a teacher in the province, has made a major contribution to the **cultural, social and/or community life** of Newfoundland and Labrador. The award recognizes contributions in the areas of the arts (music/literature/visual arts), community service, and/or municipal politics.

Allan Bishop Award

This award recognizes outstanding service to NLTA at the **provincial** level and is open to any active or life member of the Association, except that current members of the Provincial Executive are ineligible for the award and a provincial past president is ineligible for the award within three years of his/her presidency. Nominations must come from branches or special interest councils.

Bancroft Award

This award recognizes the outstanding service given to **branches** by the dedicated and talented teachers whose efforts have helped make NLTA the strong association it is today.

Barnes Award

This award recognizes outstanding **professional development** services provided by teachers at the special interest council level.

Deadline for nominations is January 15th.

All nominations for the above Association awards must be made on the proper nomination form which can be obtained from your local branch president or the NLTA Office and must be submitted by the deadline indicated in order to be considered.